Preserving Our Living Legacy

PARKS PLAN 90

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Summary

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Shaping the Future of BC Parks

The Ministry of Parks is responsible for one of British Columbia's natural treasures — the areas protected for public enjoyment by our provincial parks system. Recently public interest and concern has focused on plans for completing the provincial-park system. Public groups and resource industries alike have expressed a keen interest in seeing a comprehensive, systematic approach to planning the future of all protected lands — including provincial parks, forest wilderness areas, ecological reserves and other protective designations.

❑ *Our parks protect areas for public enjoyment.*

In response, BC Parks has developed an organized process for planning future additions to the provincial park system. This process involves the public, industry and government agencies. It will result in:

- ❑ A provincial overview which will ratify the roles and objectives of the system, and identify separate areas for study as candidates for new parks; and,
- ❑ A separate process for review and discussion of the individual study areas. Each study area will be subject to an interagency planning process.

We believe that the park system is an important reason for people choosing to live and work in British Columbia. We are committed to working with all sectors of our society to ensure that provincial parks and other protected areas are fully integrated into our social, economic and environmental strategies for the future.

An Invitation

Join us in shaping the future of the BC Parks system. We began involving British Columbians in the future of our provincial parks in 1988, when we issued a draft policy statement to encourage public discussion and comment. *Striking The Balance* was the first formal statement of public policy ever produced by BC Parks. Its purpose was to further public understanding of the BC Parks system goals and management principles. A revised *Striking The Balance (third edition)*, which reflects public comments and changing policy, is now being released. The second phase of the process has also been set in motion with the release of three new BC Parks discussion papers which deal with the Provincial Overview:

❑ *Parks policy reflects public comments.*

- ❑ ***Parks Plan 90: Summary*** (this document);
- ❑ ***Landscapes for BC Parks***, and
- ❑ ***Special Features for BC Parks***.

❑ *This **Summary** document describes the process.*

❑ ***Landscapes** describes 59 distinctive geographic areas or landscapes we recognize in B.C.*

❑ ***Special Features** identifies some of the highest mountain peaks, best beaches and rarest wildlife.*

Parks Plan 90: Summary (this document) outlines how the provincial-level planning process works and introduces the various parts of the Ministry's program. Together with *Striking the Balance*, it sets the context for publication of future discussion papers.

Landscapes for BC Parks is a technical document which shows how we can achieve our most important goal of "protecting representative examples of the landscapes of British Columbia." It describes the 59 distinctive geographical areas or landscapes which we recognize in the province. By selecting and protecting representative samples of these landscapes or regional environments, BC Parks aims to preserve forever the natural diversity of the province and to provide recreational opportunities for public enjoyment.

The document identifies distinct landscapes such as the Gulf Islands, the Fraser Basin, the Nechako Plateau, the Okanagan Basin, the East Kootenay Trench, the Chilcotin Plateau, and the Skeena Mountains. It also provides a preliminary assessment of how well the present park system represents each landscape.

Special Features for BC Parks is also a technical document. It identifies the elements required to meet the system goal of "protecting British Columbia's key recreation settings and most outstanding features." This goal is concerned with the protection of a wide selection of the best natural features and outdoor-recreation sites, such as the highest mountain peaks, best beaches, and rarest wildlife or vegetation. Using a selection, rating and inventory method, this document identifies the categories and types of features and settings that should be included in the provincial park system. Rock deposits from glacial erosion, for example, hold lesser importance because they are found throughout the province. On the other hand, shield volcanoes, such as Mount Edziza, are given high priority because they are relatively scarce and have strong visual and educational appeal.

The summary list of special features to be considered contains almost 200 categories ranging from jade deposits to muskeg in physical features, from alpine flowers to endangered animal species in biological features, and from historic sites to architectural styles in cultural features. Of those, about 45 per cent have a high-importance rating.

A preliminary list has been compiled to identify commonly-known special features. The next priority is to complete that list and determine which features need to be protected within one of the province's protected-area systems (parks, forest-wilderness areas, ecological reserves, etc.).

We Want Your Help

We want to hear from you. Like the draft statement which became *Striking The Balance,* all three publications are preliminary discussion papers intended to inform the public and encourage discussion and comment. After considering and responding to public input, appropriate changes will be made before the documents are formally incorporated into an overall plan to guide the future of BC Parks.

The release of these documents is the first stage in that public process.

Stage 1: Release Background Papers

June 1990 — *Striking the Balance* (3rd Edition)
— *Parks Plan 90: Summary*
— *Landscapes for BC Parks*
— *Special Features for BC Parks*

❑ *Release of discussion papers related to park system planning, design and selection criteria.*

Stage 2: Release Further Discussion Papers

Fall 1990 — Recreation Objectives
— Detailed Evaluation of Landscape Protection and List of Park Study Areas
— Coastal and Marine Park Review

❑ *Release of discussion papers related to the recreational role of BC Parks, as well as park system evaluation.*

Beginning in the fall of 1990, a series of regional public discussions will be organized to obtain public input on the discussion papers released in June and October, and to identify public concerns on broader issues related to the park system planning. In addition, arrangements will be made to meet with groups and individuals from public-interest groups, resource industries and recreational-business interests.

Stage 3: Completing the Process

❑ *Action plan and timetable for substantial completion.*

Following completion of the regional public meetings, a province-wide action plan will be prepared. This will confirm the broad goals and objectives for the provincial park system, identify other candidates for study as large-park additions to the system, and propose a timetable and process for substantial completion of the provincial park system. That document will be discussed extensively with the public and government agencies in 1991.

Park Study Areas

While we are dealing with the broad provincial plans in the fall, we will also begin a full review of key park-study areas:

- ❑ Chilko Lake, southwest of Williams Lake in the Chilcotin Mountains;
- ❑ Broughton Archipelago, east of Port Hardy on the mainland side of Queen Charlotte Strait.

These will act as models for how we will deal with individual study areas in the future.

Park Master Plans

While we are undertaking this process, we will also continue with our commitment to public involvement in preparing plans for our established parks. In 1990, a number of major projects will be underway throughout the province, including new master plans for:

- ❑ Mount Robson Provincial Park;
- ❑ Cypress Provincial Park.

Opportunities for Public Participation

Help us shape the future of BC Parks. By writing to us now, you can be placed on our mailing list to receive the documents as they are released, as well as the timetable for public discussions. After you read the documents, we want your comments. Attend our public sessions in the fall or write to us again.

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